



Response to BBC Open Consultations

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland welcomes the BBC Trust's invitation to consult on the key priorities for the six Public Purposes as set by the BBC Charter.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland also believes that the six Public Purposes will help invigorate public service broadcasting in the years to come through education, representation and the promotion of excellence in all areas of communication.

However we believe that the fine history and quality of religious broadcasting is in danger of being undermined by a reductionist approach within the Public Purpose key priorities which diminishes the role of religious broadcasting to little more than criticism as by yet undefined standards.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland agrees that open debate regarding religious life and practice is invaluable for our society today but the loss of the BBC's earlier aim to provide religious broadcasting characterised by *celebration* will fail to properly encapsulate the true nature of religious belief in the UK today.

Religious belief is not simply a matter of a list of facts about tradition and doctrine but a living celebration of those beliefs in daily life. To fully inform and educate the wider public it is vital to provide religious broadcasting that includes this important celebratory role.

As such we suggest that a better wording for the Public Purpose regarding *Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities* in relation to how the BBC will *Reflect the different religious and other beliefs in the UK* should be:

"The BBC should give people opportunities to celebrate and understand the different religious beliefs in the UK, and to examine all beliefs critically."

We look forward to the BBC Trust's response on this issue.

Christopher Mark Glover

Convenor
Communications Development Committee
Board of Communications
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Church House
Fisherwick Place
Belfast
BT1 6DW